

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 /077 W

----- 027576

R 130640Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5572

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FR, CT, OVIP (GISCARD D'ESTAING, VALERY)

SUBJECT: FRANCO/CAR RELATIONS: VISIT OF FRENCH PRESIDENT

REF: BANGUI 0337

1. VISIT OF VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING TO CAR MARCH 5-8 REPRESENTED FIRST VISIT BY FRENCH PRESIDENT CAR SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1960. MOREOVER, SINCE ASSUMING PRESIDENCY, THIS WAS HIS FIRST VISIT TO AFRICA AND FIRST OFFICIAL VIST OUTSIDE OF FRANCE.

2. LOCAL CONSENSUS OF OPINION IS THAT VISIT IS TRIUMPH OF PERSONAL PRESTIGE FOR CAR PRESIDENT JEAN-BEDEL BOKASSA AND IS HIGH WATER MARK IN POST-INDEPENDENCE FRENCH/CAR RELATIONS. IN NATIONAL TELEVISION/RADIO ADDRESS ON MARCH 9 BOKASSA EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO CAR CITIZENRY DOR HELPING MAKE A SUCCESS OF BOTH PRESIDENTIAL VISIT AND FRANCO-AFRICAN SUMMIT (REFTEL). IN GOING ON TO DECLARE MARCH 10 NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN COMMEMORATION OF HISTORIC OCCASION, BOKASSA LEFT NO DOUBT IN ANYONE'S MIND THAT HE CONSIDERS GISCARD D'ESTAING VISIT MORE IMPORTANT OF TWO EVENTS.

3. VISIT WAS ALOS PERSONAL TRIUMPH FOR FRENCH PRESIDENT
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WHEREVER HE APPEARED DURING FOUR-DAY VISIT WHICH WAS

MINGLED WITH FRANCOPHONE CHIEFS OF STATE SUMMIT MARCH 7-8. HE WAS GREETED ENTHUSIASTICALLY BY LARGE CROWDS OF WELL-WISHERS, INCLUDING SOME 4000-MEMBER FRENCH EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY. GISCARD D'ESTAING AAS MADE CAR'S FIRST HONORARY CITIZEN AT AIRPORT ARRIVAL CEREMONY. HE IN TURN DECORATED ALL MINISTERS IN CAR'S CABINET WHICH MANY IN LOCAL FRENCH COMMUNITY THOUGHT WAS GOING TOO FAR IN VIEW OF DUBIOUS RECORDS OF SOME MINISTERS. FRENCH PRESIDENT ALSO PARTICIPATED IN CEREMONY MARCH 8 UNVAILING NEW MONUMENT COMPLEX DEDICATED TO FRANCO/CENTRAL AFRICAN COOPERATION COMPOSED OF STATUES , OF BOKASSA GAZING RESPECTFULLY AT LARGER MONUMENT COMPOSED OF THE CROSS OF LORRAINE AND STAR OF MESAN, CAR'S SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY.

4. JOINT COMMUNIQUE AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT HIGHLIGHTS "SPIRIT OF PERFECT FRIENDSHIP, MUTUAL COMPREHENSION AND COMPLETE HARMONY OF VIEWS AS REGARDS DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH/CAR RELATIONS" WHICH COMMUNIQUE DESCRIBED AS HAVING A "PRIVILEGDED CHARACTER."

5. COMMUNIQUE NOTED ALSO THAT IN DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL COOPERATION PARTICULAR ATTENTION WAS GIVEN TO QUOTE PROJECT OF FREEING CAR FROM ITS ENCLAVEMENT UNQUOTE. WHILE NO DIRECT MENTION WAS MADE OF BOKASSA'S MAIN PROJECT OF A RAIL LINK TO THE SEA, THERE WAS AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO FRENCH ASSISTANCE QUOTE EITHER DIRECTLY OR BY INTERCESSION WITH THE EC OR INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL BODIES UNQUOTE IN MEETING THIS ENCLAVEMENT PROBLEM. THE ROLE OF FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FRENCH ENTERPRISES IN THIS PROCESS WAS HIGHLIGHTED. BOTH PRESIDENTS AGREED TO MAKE ALL EFFORTS TO INSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECLARATION OF COOPERATION SIGNED DECMEBER 1 DURING MINISTER ABELIN'S VISIT TO BANGUI.

6. DURING THE VISIT, FINMIN FOURCADE AND COOPERATION MINISTER ABELIN CONCLUDED ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY THE GOCAR WOULD RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL CFA 2 BILLION CREDITS OF WHICH CFA 1 BILLION WAS EARMARKED FOR QHE CAR/PTT. AS REPORTED BANGUI 353 FOURCADE WAS UNDERSTANDABLY DISPLEASED SUBSEQUENTLY TO LEARN OF CAR SIGNATURE ON THE EVE OF THE VISIT OF AN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGREEMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO SOVIET AIRPLANES FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL FLEET. HOWEVER, THIS SOUR NOTE WAS NOT PETMITTED TO TAINT CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT.
DALE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGUI00365
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750087-0915
From: BANGUI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750356/aaaabxuj.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGUI 0337
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <20 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRANCO/CAR RELATIONS: VISIT OF FRENCH PRESIDENT
TAGS: OVIP, FR, CT, (GISCARD D'ESTAING, VALERY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006